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Donelan et al.

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(54) **SYSTEM, METHOD, AND DEVICE FOR PROVIDING A GAME AWARDING PRIZES ACCORDING TO LOCATIONS OF WINNING RELOCATABLE GAMING INDICIA**

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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CPC ***G07F 17/3246*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3206*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3211*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3251*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3267*** (2013.01); ***G07F 17/3293*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 463/11, 12, 13
See application file for complete search history.

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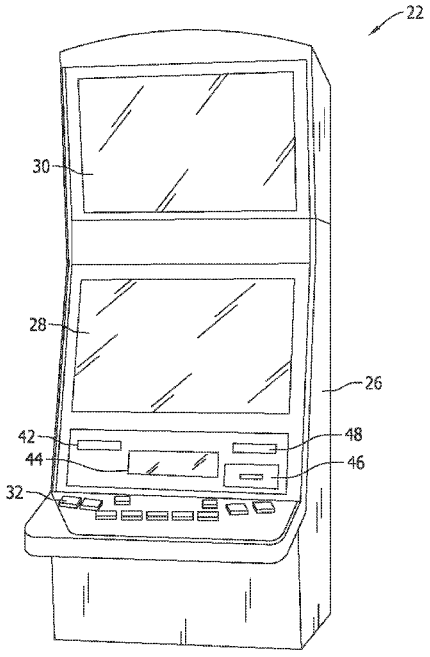
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Newman Law, LLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A gaming machine, system, and method for presenting a game may include accepting a wager, randomly selecting k relocatable indicia from a set of N possible indicia, where N>k, positioning the k indicia into j possible locations (j>=k), evaluating the k indicia relative to first paytable with payout rules based solely on the indicia values, evaluating the k indicia relative to a second paytable with payout rules based on at least the location of the indicia, and awarding any prizes earned.

20 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



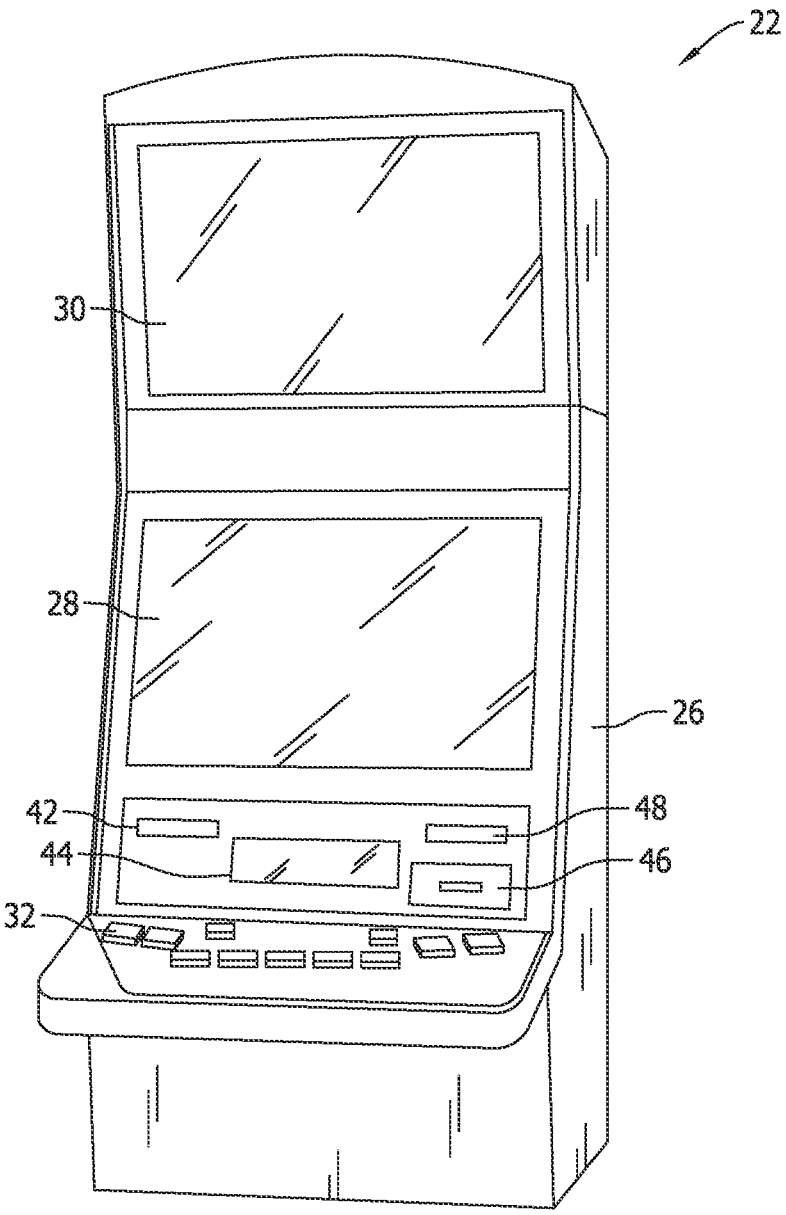


FIG. 1

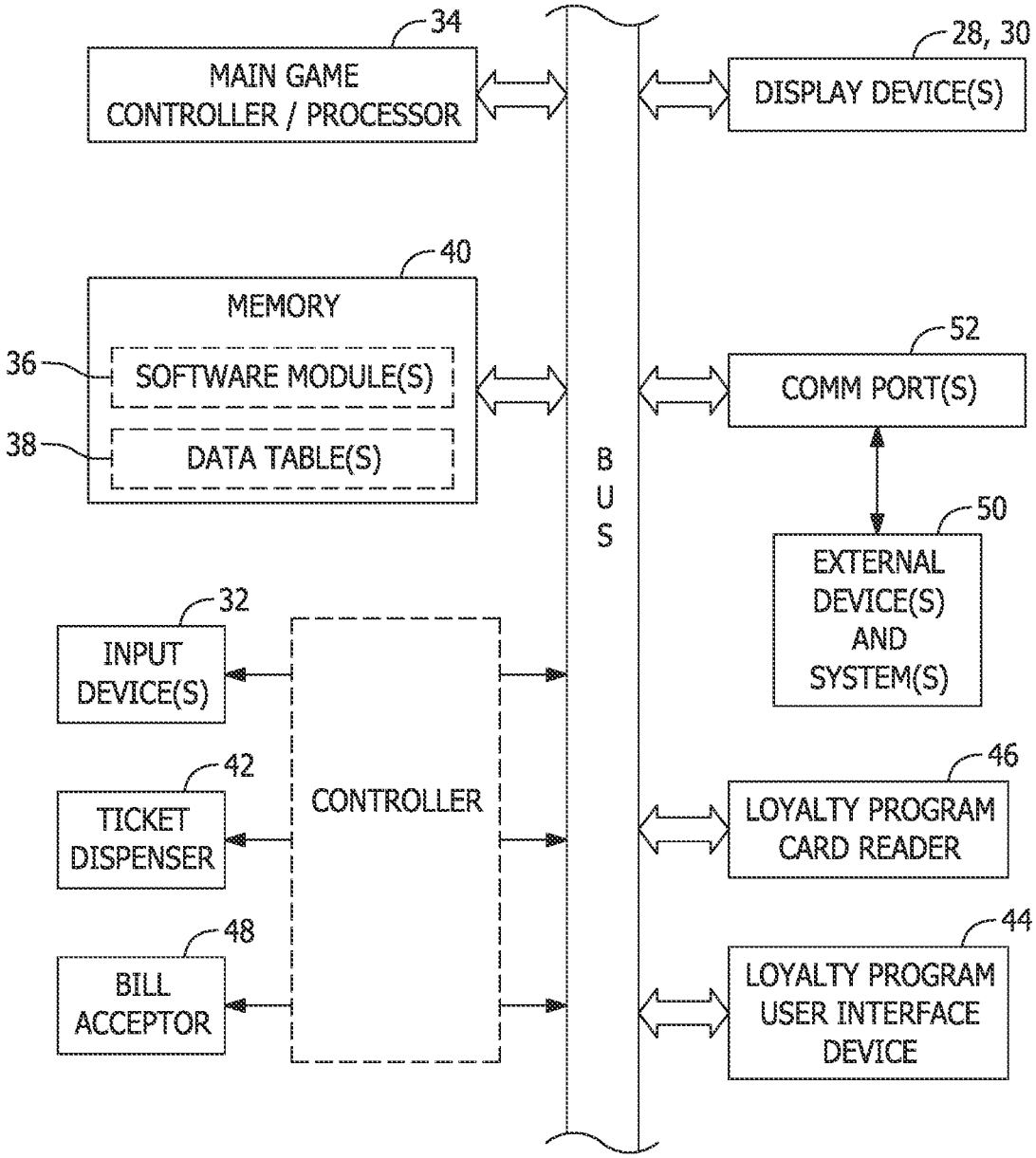

34
MAIN GAME CONTROLLER / PROCESSOR
28, 30
DISPLAY DEVICE(S)
40
MEMORY
36
SOFTWARE MODULE(S)
38
DATA TABLE(S)
52
COMM PORT(S)
BUS
50
EXTERNAL DEVICE(S) AND SYSTEM(S)
32
INPUT DEVICE(S)
CONTROLLER
42
TICKET DISPENSER
46
LOYALTY PROGRAM CARD READER
48
BILL ACCEPTOR
44
LOYALTY PROGRAM USER INTERFACE DEVICE

FIG. 2

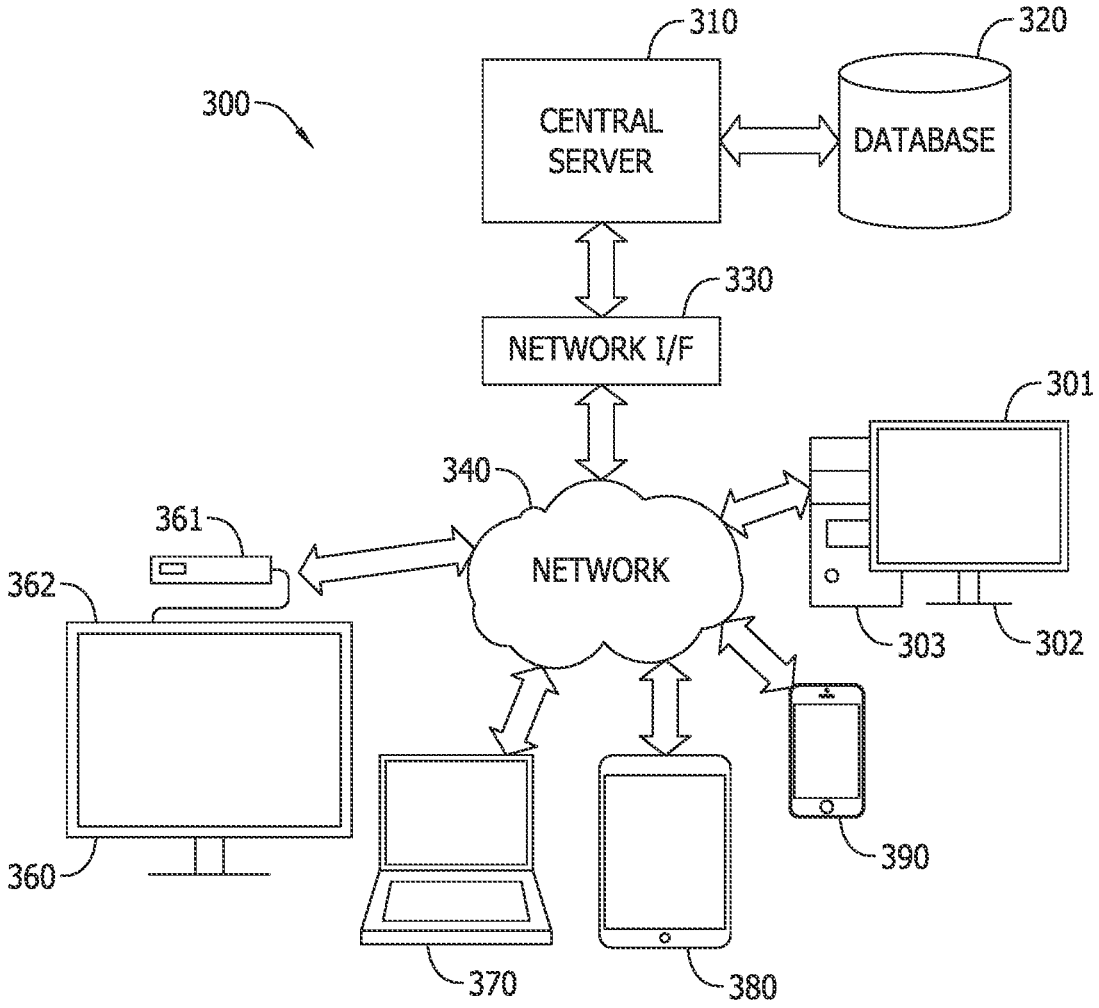

300
310
CENTRAL SERVER
320
DATABASE
330
NETWORK I/F
340
NETWORK
301
303
302
361
362
360
370
380
390

FIG. 3

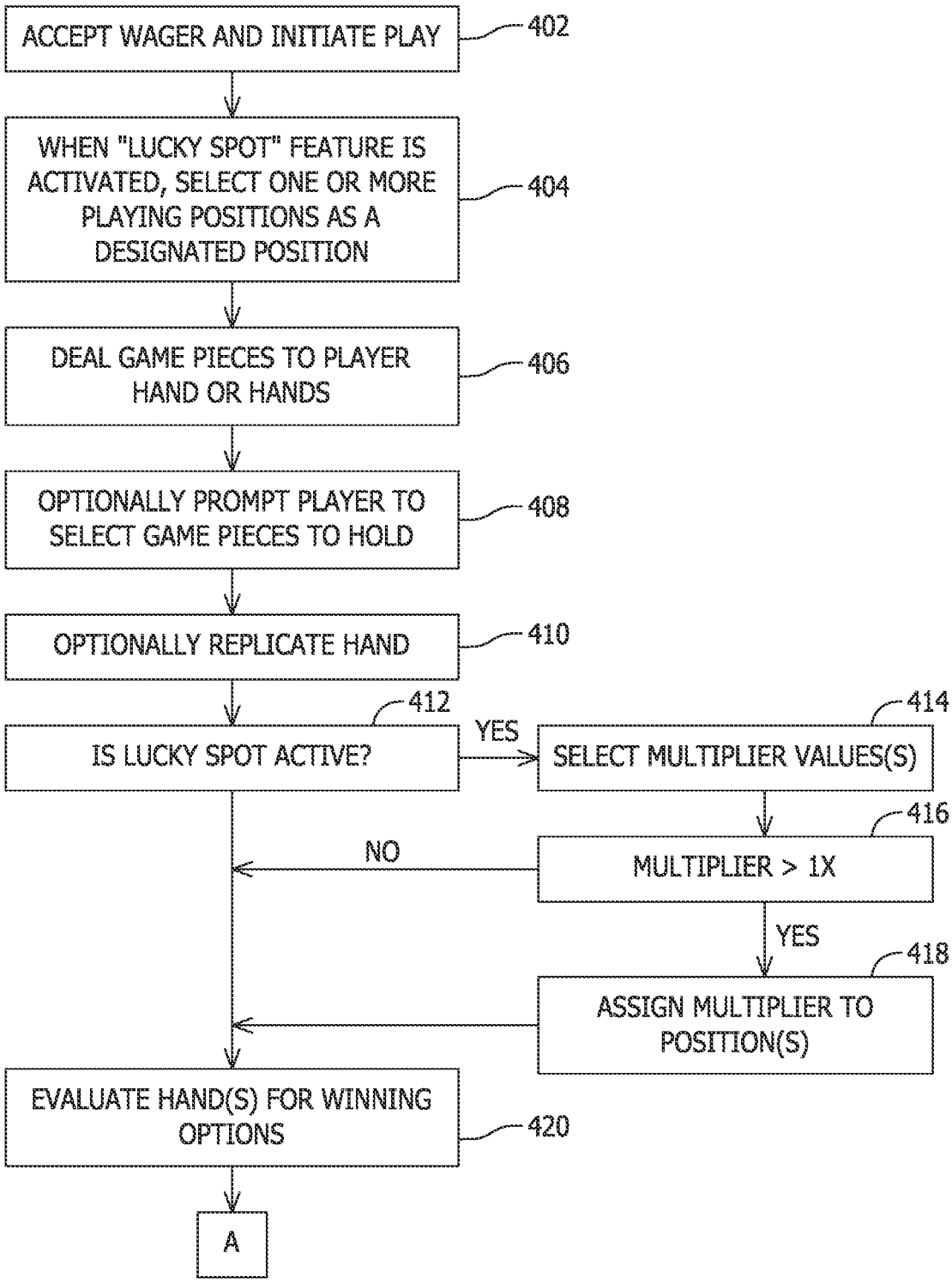

ACCEPT WAGER AND INITIATE PLAY
402
WHEN "LUCKY SPOT" FEATURE IS ACTIVATED, SELECT ONE OR MORE PLAYING POSITIONS AS A DESIGNATED POSITION
404
DEAL GAME PIECES TO PLAYER HAND OR HANDS
406
OPTIONALLY PROMPT PLAYER TO SELECT GAME PIECES TO HOLD
408
OPTIONALLY REPLICATE HAND
410
412
IS LUCKY SPOT ACTIVE?
YES
414
SELECT MULTIPLIER VALUES(S)
416
NO
MULTIPLIER > 1X
YES
418
ASSIGN MULTIPLIER TO POSITION(S)
EVALUATE HAND(S) FOR WINNING OPTIONS
420
A

FIG. 4A

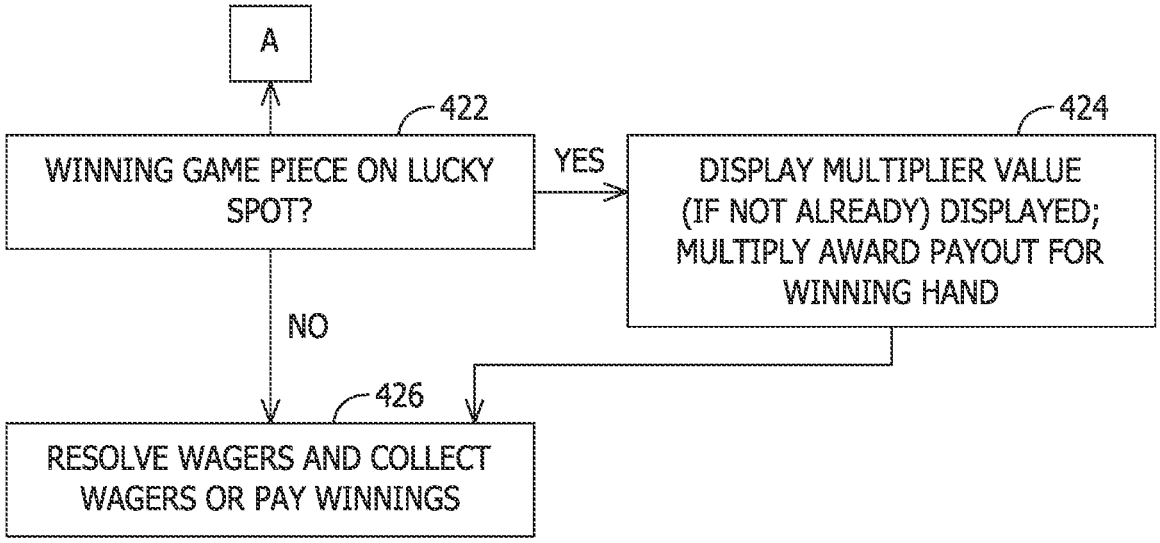

A
422
WINNING GAME PIECE ON LUCKY SPOT?
YES
424
DISPLAY MULTIPLIER VALUE (IF NOT ALREADY) DISPLAYED; MULTIPLY AWARD PAYOUT FOR WINNING HAND
NO
426
RESOLVE WAGERS AND COLLECT WAGERS OR PAY WINNINGS

FIG. 4B

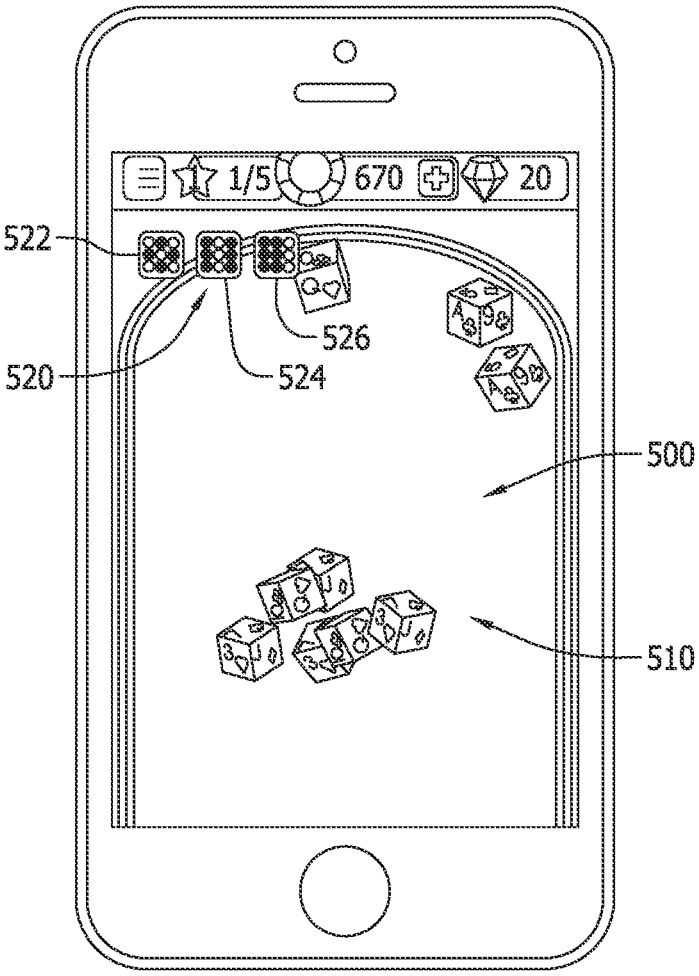


FIG. 5A

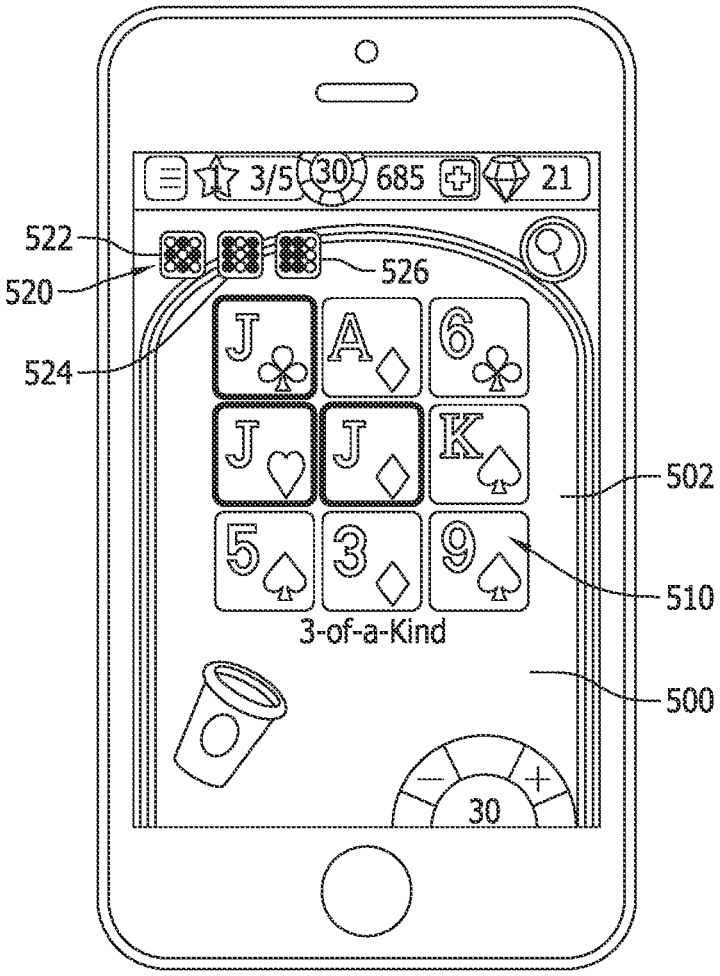


FIG. 5B

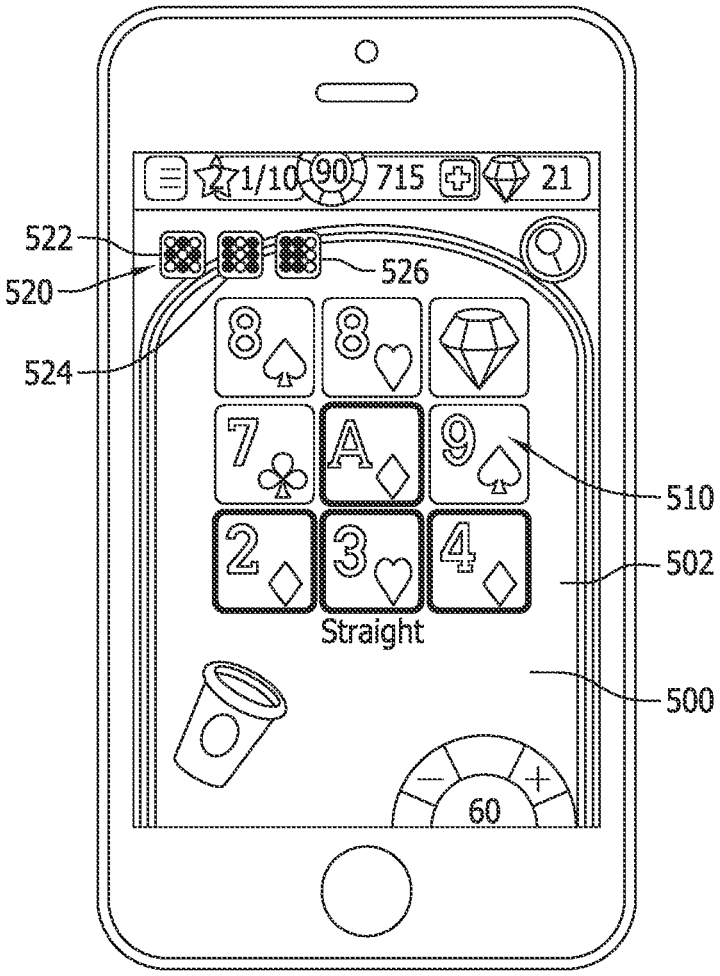


FIG. 5C

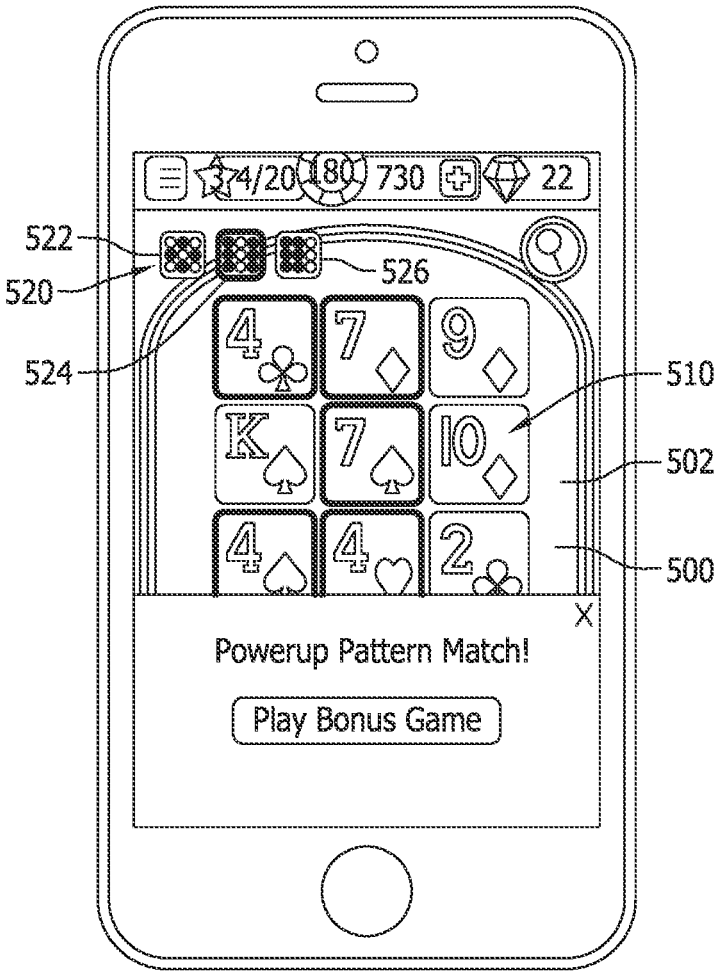

4/20
80
730
22
522
520
524
526
510
502
500
Powerup Pattern Match!
Play Bonus Game

FIG. 5D

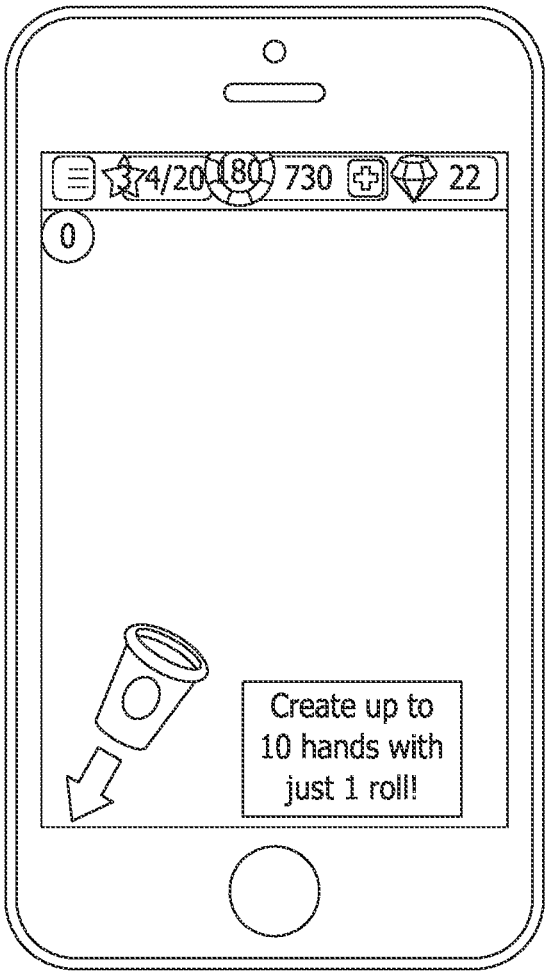


FIG. 5E

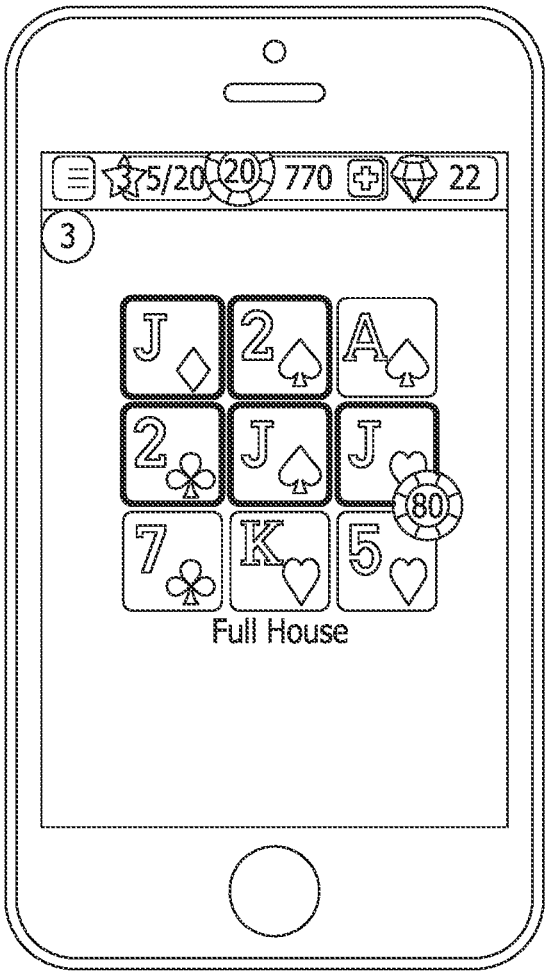


FIG. 5F

SYSTEM, METHOD, AND DEVICE FOR PROVIDING A GAME AWARDING PRIZES ACCORDING TO LOCATIONS OF WINNING RELOCATABLE GAMING INDICIA

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/233,978 which was filed on Sep. 28, 2015, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

The disclosed embodiments relate to gaming systems and devices. More particularly, the disclosed embodiments relate to a method, system, and device where a plurality of gaming element indicia are randomly selected and positioned before being evaluated for payouts via a first set of rules based on the type of indicia and on a second set of rules based on position.

2. Related Art

There are known games involving the random selection of a plurality of gaming elements that are evaluated based on a first set of game rules based only on the type or value of the indicia, such as the selection of five cards from a deck of playing cards in Video Poker games or such as the rolling of five dice in poker dice games.

In some of these games, often referred to as "stud" games, the final gambling result is based entirely on the initial indicia selection. In other such games, often referred to as "draw" games, one or more of the indicia may be changed based on game rules or player selection prior to evaluation of the final gambling result.

In some implementations, such as with physical dice or with digitally generated dice meant to visually emulate physical dice, the positioning of the indicia can be in any location within a common defined area within the game field.

In other implementations selected indicia are positioned at specific locations such as each of the 5 cards visible in Video Poker always being positioned in the same location on the game field, but the actual ordering of the cards is not considered for the purposes of gambling evaluation.

In other implementation, such as Video Poker variations where a subset of the defined awards (usually a Royal Flush dealt in rank-ascending order and/or in rank-descending order), the order of the indicia may or may not matter based on the outcome.

Other implementations, such as the Power Dice game that evaluates dice arranged in a grid based on indicia value and position, comparable to slot machine games that evaluate slot reel symbols based on the appearance of each symbol and its location relative to other symbols with respect to positional patterns often referred to as paylines or pay lines, the positioning of the indicia is fundamental to the gambling evaluation. However, card and dice differ from slot games insofar as slot machines involve gaming elements constrained to specific locations, especially in terms of horizontal placement viz. a viz. different reel strips assigned to different columns whereas dice and cards are freely positionable.

Some of these games include gaming elements that present a plurality of components per indicia, such as a suit designator and a rank designator that appear on most playing cards and certain types of dice. In such games, award definitions can be based on either or both types of indicia components, such as the following example traditional poker ranks:

TABLE 1

Royal Flush (suit and rank)
Straight Flush (suit and rank)
Four-of-a-Kind (rank)
Full House (rank)
Flush (suit)
Straight (rank)
Two Pair (rank)
Pair (rank)

Other of these games include gaming elements that present only a single component per indicia, such as the number of spots or pips visible on the top-most side of a rolled or thrown die. In such games, award definitions are based solely on the single type of indicia component, such as shown in the following poker-dice ranks:

TABLE 2

Five-of-a-Kind	All five dice display same value
Four-of-a-Kind	Four of the five dice display the same value and one other die displays a different value
Full House	Three dice display the same first value and two other dice display the same second value
Three-of-a-Kind	Three dice display the same first value and two other dice display each a value that does not match any other visible value
Two Pair	Two dice display the same first value and two other dice display the same second value and one other die displays a value that does not match any other visible value
Pair	Two dice display the same value and three other dice display each a value that does not match any other visible value

There are also known games whereby the evaluation of the gambling outcome is based solely on the positioning of one or more game elements relative to one or more other game elements, such as which marked roulette wheel well a roulette ball lands in roulette, or such as which wheel slice on a rotating aligns with one or more wheel pointers or flippers in the Money Wheel game or in Wheel of Fortune slot game bonus.

There continues to be a need for devices and methods of conducting and playing new and exciting wagering and casual games.

SUMMARY

Accordingly, the disclosed embodiments provide a method, gaming device, and gaming system where a plurality gaming element indicia are randomly selected and positioned before being evaluated for payouts via a first set of rules based on the type indicia and a second set of rules based on position.

In one embodiment, there is a method and system of conducting a wagering game on a gaming machine. The gaming machine may comprise a monetary-funds accepting mechanism for accepting monetary funds to increase a player credit balance, at least one display device, at least one player input device, a memory device, and a controller. The method may include receiving monetary funds from a player to increase a credit balance at the gaming machine, and

receiving a wager from the credit balance from the player via the at least one player input device.

The display of the gaming machine is then configured to display a virtual playing surface which may have at least one designatable game piece position marker. A plurality of relocatable playing pieces are provided and displayed. At least one of the relocatable playing pieces is randomly selected and positioned into a predefined position to form a playing hand. A first evaluation of the playing hand is conducted to determine whether the playing hand comprises a winning outcome

A second evaluation of the playing hand may be conducted to determine whether any of the relocatable playing pieces forming the playing hand that are part of the winning outcome are disposed on a position of the predefined arrangement marked by the at least one designatable game piece position marker. Prizes are awarded based on the first and the second evaluation.

In some embodiments, the relocatable gaming pieces are dice. For example, the dice may be six-sided dice with pips. The dice may also include a set of non-identically indiciaed dice. In other examples, the relocatable gaming pieces are playing cards.

The first evaluation may include comparing the playing hand to a first payout table based on poker outcomes. For example, the winning outcome may include a poker outcome such as a straight, a full house, etc. The awarded prize may include a bonus event such as at least one free game.

In some embodiments, one second award is based on the second evaluation and provides for an increase in the value of a first award based on the first evaluation. The increase in the value of the first award may be a multiplication of the value of the first award. The multiplication may be based on a fixed value or a variable value. The value may be displayed as part of the designatable positioning marker on the playing surface. In some instances, the variable value is based on a secondary determination. The secondary determination may include a random selection from a weighted table of available values, an outcome represented by a virtual throwing or virtual rolling of at least one die, by a draw of a card, or by some other game action.

In one example embodiment, the predefined arrangement comprises a grid, and the at least one designatable game piece position markers designate a predetermined pattern of positions on the grid. In some instances, a first wager activates the first evaluation and a second wager activates the second evaluation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** shows a gaming machine, according to one exemplary embodiment.

FIG. **2** shows a schematic of elements of the gaming machine of FIG. **1**

FIG. **3** shows a client-server gaming system according to one exemplary embodiment.

FIG. **4**A and FIG. **4**B show a gaming machine, according to one exemplary embodiment.

FIG. **5**A, FIG. **5**B, FIG. **5**C, FIG. **5**D, FIG. **5**E, and FIG. **5**F, show an example of game play for playing a game awarding prizes according to locations of winning relocatable gaming indicia, according to one exemplary embodiment.

The components in the figures are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention. In the figures, like reference numerals designate corresponding parts throughout the different views.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

One series of embodiments provides a Poker Dice-style wagering game where dice outcomes are randomly determined and the dice are positioned into one of a plurality of available positions by a mechanism such as random placement, physics-based placement, ordered placement relative to explicit game rules, placement controlled by non-explicit game implementation, or any other suitable mechanism.

Some of the positions onto which dice are positioned are designated as belonging to a first set of bonus positions, belonging to a second set of bonus positions, or not belonging to any set of bonus positions. Such bonus location(s) may be designated randomly before the start of each game, designated randomly after the end of each game, designated in a predetermined manner which applies to multiple games, designated by the player before the start of each game, designated by the player before the start of a series of games, or designated by any other suitable mechanism.

Once all dice are positioned, the values on the top surface of the dice, or a visible surface of digital dice, are evaluated relative to a first paytable based on defined outcomes, such as poker outcomes. The dice are also evaluated based on a second paytable according to other criteria, at least one of which is position. In one embodiment, it may be that the dice values can be interpreted to match two or more of the defined winning outcomes. Accordingly, the outcome with the highest payout may be selected. In other embodiments, the outcome with the lowest payout may be selected, or one of the matched defined winning outcomes may be chosen randomly. If the game outcome is evaluated as a winning outcome relative to a first paytable, the player receives a first award. If the game outcome is evaluated as a winning outcome relative to a second paytable, the player receives a second award. In some variations, the type or value of the second paytable award is dependent upon the type or value of the first paytable outcome. In other variations, the type or value of the second paytable award is not dependent upon the type or value of the first paytable outcome.

In some embodiments, the second paytable evaluation criteria is dependent upon a primary paytable evaluation. For example, a secondary paytable requires that a certain number of winning dice be positioned at or on locations belonging to a specific set of bonus positions, where "winning dice" refers to the specific dice designated by a first paytable evaluation. In some variations, winning dice are a minimum set of dice required to form the highest poker hand of the highest-paying first paytable outcome. In some other variations, winning dice are a minimum set of dice required to form any hand of the highest-paying first paytable outcome type. In some other variations, winning dice are minimum set of dice required to form any hand which activates the bonus, even if a higher-paying hand also exists.

For example, a game outcome comprised of these six game indicia: 3♥, 5♥, 7♥, 9♥, J♥, and A♥, would successfully match a five-indicia "Flush" outcome in a poker-based paytable. To form the highest-ranking flush, one would choose the five highest-ranking indicia and ignore the lowest-ranking indicia which is the 3-of-hearts. However, there are six ways to form a five-indicia flush: one for each indicium selected as the ignored indicium.

In other embodiments, the second paytable evaluation criteria includes an indicia value matching criteria which is

different from the first paytable indicia value matching criteria. This would include, for example, a second paytable indicia value criteria that is based on the sum of values of the indicia positioned on or at locations belonging to a specific set of bonus positions or would include a second paytable indicia value criteria that is based the color matching of the suits of the indicia positioned on or at locations belonging to a specific set of bonus positions.

In some embodiments, each of N locations belonging to a specific set of bonus positions requires a winning die. In some other embodiments, k of N locations belonging to a specific set of bonus positions or requires a winning die, where k<N. In some embodiments, there is a single bonus position. In some embodiments, there is a list comprised of at least two selections, wherein each the selection designates a single bonus positions. In some other embodiments, there is a single designation of two or more bonus positions. In some embodiments, there is a list with at least two selections, wherein each the selection designates a set of one or more bonus positions. In some multi-selection variations, no two designated bonus positions or sets of designated bonus positions share the same position. In some other multi-selection variations, two or more designated bonus positions or sets of designated bonus positions share one or more common positions. In some multi-selection variations, each selection designates the same number of bonus positions. In some other multi-set variations, a first selection has a different number of designated bonus positions as a second selection. In some multi-selection variations, each selection of designated bonus positions provides the same awards. In some other multi-selection variations, the designated bonus position(s) from a first selection pays different awards than the designated bonus position(s) from a second selection.

In some embodiments, the awards from a first paytable evaluation are of a different type than the awards from a second paytable evaluation. In some embodiments, the value of a second paytable award is dependent upon a first paytable evaluation such as in a game, for example, where a second paytable award multiplies the value of the primary paytable award. An award event can be of any suitable type including but not limited to a fixed award amount, a variable award amount, a progressive jackpot award amount, a primary currency award, a secondary currency award, a loyalty program award, a player status level award, the triggering of a bonus game or event, the advancement of bonus triggering progress bar, or any other suitable prize or prize event.

In embodiments in which a bonus event is awarded, the bonus event can be of any suitable type including but not limited to free games with the same paytable, free games with one or more alternate paytables, one or more draw rounds where certain dice are held and other dice re-rolled based on system selection, draw rounds where certain dice are held and other dice re-rolled based on player selection, a bonus game based on a different mechanism than that of the base game, or any suitable bonus event or combination thereof.

In some variations, the same type of bonus event is awarded. In some other variations, different types of bonus events are awarded. In some variations, the extent of the awarded bonus, such as the number of awarded free games, or the number of draw rounds, or any other specific quantity is the same for all bonus events awarded. In some variations, the extent of the awarded bonus can vary from award to award. In variations with variable type of bonus award and/or variable bonus award extent, the variation can be based on any suitable factor including but not limited to: a first paytable evaluation; a second paytable evaluation; player selection of hidden values; player selection of visible values; a secondary determination mechanism not displayed to the player; a secondary determination mechanism such as the spin of a wheel, roll of dice, opening of a prize chest, a drawing of a card or any other kind of suitable mechanism that is displayed to the player; player loyalty program status; player's most recent wager size; player wager history; community game play outcome or event; or any other suitable mechanism or combination thereof.

Another series of embodiments of the present invention provides variations of Video Poker wherein at least one card position is designated as a bonus position. If a card designated as a winning card relative to a first paytable is positioned on a designated bonus spot, then a bonus event is awarded. In some variations, the bonus event is a fixed multiplier. In some other variations, the bonus event is a randomly selected multiplier. In some variations with randomly selected multiplier values, the selection is accomplished with a secondary determination mechanism not displayed to the player. In some other variations with randomly selected multiplier values, the selection is accomplished with a secondary determination mechanism such as the spin of a wheel or roll of a dice or any other kind of suitable mechanism that is displayed to the player. In some variations, the awarded multiplier applies to only the hand in which the winning card is positioned. In some other variations, in the case of a game with a plurality of hands, the awarded multiplier applies to all winning hands. In the case where two or more multipliers can apply to the same hand win, in some embodiments, the effective award multiplier is based on the product of the multipliers.

In some embodiments, a first bonus position designation is associated with a first award and a second bonus position is associated with a second first award. For example, a single hand video poker variation wherein the system randomly selects either a "2×" designation or a "3×" designation, randomly assigned to be displayed on the bonus-designated position, such that a winning card landing on a "2×" designation results in the doubling of standard payout for the win while a winning card landing on a "2×" designation results in the doubling of standard payout for the win.

In some embodiments, the designation of a randomly-selected position as a bonus position afresh for each game upon the start of the game. In some embodiments, the designation of a randomly-selected position as a bonus position afresh for each game at the start of the draw round. In yet other embodiments, the designation of the bonus position is fixed from game to game.

In some embodiments, the number of positions designated as bonus positions is the same from game to game. In some embodiments, the number of positions designated as bonus positions can change from game to game based on any suitable mechanism such as, but not limited to (a) prior player wins; or (b) prior player losses; or (c) attaining a specific non-winning hand outcome; or (d) attaining a specific winning-hand outcome; or (e) player's main game bet size; or (f) player's sidebet bet size; or (g) player's primary currency balance; or (h) player's secondary currency balance; or (i) player's loyalty program status; or (j) any other suitable mechanism; or (k) any combination thereof.

Considering embodiments applied to multi-hand Video Poker, there are a number of implementation variations. In some variations, a first position is randomly designated as a bonus position selected across all possible card positions. In some variations, a second position is randomly designated as a bonus position selected across all possible card positions.

In some variations, a first position is randomly designated as a bonus position selected within each of a plurality of hands. In some variations, each hand has an equal chance to contain one or more bonus-designated positions. In some variations, a first hand has a different probability of having one or more bonus-designated positions relative to a second hand. In some variations, only the base hand is assigned bonus-designated positions. In some embodiments that assign one or more bonus-designated positions to the base hand, the holding or replicating of a card in the base hand has no impact on whether or not the corresponding position in the non-base hands is assigned a bonus-designated position. In some embodiments that assign one or more bonus-designated positions to the base hand, the holding or replicating of a card in the base hand causes a change in the bonus-designation of the corresponding position in the non-base hands, such as, but not limited to: (a) making the corresponding non-base hand position a bonus-designated position in all non-base hands, (a) making the corresponding non-base hand position a bonus-designated position in at least one non-base hand, or (c) increasing the value the corresponding non-base hand position if it is already a bonus-designated position, or (d) any other suitable mechanism or (e) any combination thereof.

In a preferred embodiment, the methods of game play and presentation are implemented via a gaming machine or gaming system. Such a gaming machine may have various configurations.

The gaming machine may be located at a casino (and as such may be referred to as an "Electronic Gaming Machine"). As described below, the gaming machine may be part of a gaming system, such as a casino gaming system which links two or more of the gaming machines or one or more gaming machines with other devices, such as one or more table games, kiosks, accounting systems or servers, progressive systems or servers, player tracking systems or servers or the like.

One configuration of a gaming machine **22** is illustrated in FIG. **1**. As illustrated, the gaming machine **22** generally comprises a housing or cabinet **26** for supporting and/or enclosing various components required for operation of the gaming machine. In the embodiment illustrated, the housing **26** includes a door located at a front thereof, the door capable of being moved between an open position which allows access to the interior, and a closed position in which access to the interior is generally prevented. The configuration of the gaming machine **22** may vary. In the embodiment illustrated, the gaming machine **22** has an "upright" configuration. However, the gaming machine **22** could have other configurations, shapes or dimensions (such as being of a "slant"-type, "bar-top" or other configuration as is well known to those of skill in the art).

The gaming machine **22** preferably includes at least one first display device **28** configured to display game information. The display device **28** may comprise an electronic video display such as a cathode ray tube (CRT), high resolution flat panel liquid crystal display (LCD), projection LCD, plasma display, field emission display, digital micro-mirror display (DMD), digital light processing display (DLP), LCD touchscreen, a light emitting display (LED) or other suitable displays now known or later developed, in a variety of resolutions, sizes and formats (e.g. 4:3, wide-screen or the like). The display device **28** may be capable of projecting or displaying a wide variety of information, including images, symbols and other indicia or information associated with game play, game promotion or other events. The gaming machine **22** might include more than one display device, such as a main or first display device **28** and a secondary display device **30**. The two or more display devices might be associated with the housing or, as illustrated in FIG. **1**, the gaming machine **22** might also include a top box or other portion which includes the one or more second display devices **30**. Also, the gaming machine **22** might include side displays (such as mounted to the exterior of the housing **26**) and might include multiple displays of differing sizes.

As described in more detail below, the gaming machine **22** is preferably configured to present one or more games upon a player making a monetary payment or wager. In this regard, as described in more detail below, the gaming machine **22** includes mechanism or means for accepting a monetary value or any equivalence thereof.

In one embodiment, certain game outcomes (but preferably not all game outcomes) may be designated as winning outcomes (the non-winning outcomes may be referred to as losing outcomes). Prizes or awards may be provided for winning outcomes, such as monetary payments (or representations thereof, such as prize of credits), or promotional awards as detailed herein. As detailed below, the gaming machine **22** preferably includes a mechanism or means for returning unused monetary funds and/or dispensing winnings to a player.

The gaming machine **22** preferably includes one or more player input devices **32** (such as input buttons, plunger mechanisms, a touch-screen display, joystick, touch-pad or the like). These one or more devices **30** may be utilized by the player to facilitate game play, such as by providing input or instruction to the gaming machine **22**. For example, such input devices **30** may be utilized by a player to place a wager, cause the gaming machine **22** to initiate a game, to initiate designated markers marking "lucky spots," to "cash out" of the gaming machine, or to provide various other inputs.

Referring to FIG. **2**, in one preferred embodiment, the gaming machine **22** includes at least one microprocessor or controller **34** for controlling the gaming machine, including receiving player input and sending output signals for controlling the various components or peripheral devices of the machine **22** (such as generating game information for display by the display devices **28**,**30**). The controller **34** may be arranged to receive information regarding funds provided by a player to the gaming machine **22**, receive input such as a purchase/bet signal when a purchase/bet button is depressed, and receive other inputs from a player. The controller may be arranged to generate information regarding a game, such as generating game information for display by the at least one display device **28**,**30** (such as information comprising lucky spot features and relocatable gaming pieces, as detailed below), for determining winning or losing game outcomes and for displaying information regarding awards for winning game outcomes, among other things.

The controller **34** may be configured to execute machine readable code or "software" or otherwise process information, such as obtained from a remote server. Software **36** or other instructions may be stored at a memory or data storage device **40**, e.g. in a fixed or non-transitory configuration. The memory may also store other information or data **40**, such as data stored in table or other forms (including, but not limited to look-up tables, pay tables and other information including tracked game play information). The gaming machine **22** may also include one or more random number generators for generating random numbers (such as implemented by a pseudo-random number generator software module stored in the memory **40** and executable by the processor **34**), such as

for use in dealing game pieces to a player, for selecting lucky spot positions on one of a plurality of positions in a predetermined game layout, for selecting multiplier values, or for positioning game elements in a random fashion whether or not player input is used by the gaming machine to affect the positioning.

Preferably, the controller **34** is configured to execute machine readable code or instructions (e.g. software) which are configured to implement the game. In this regard, the gaming machine **22** is specially configured to present the game of the invention via specific software and/or hardware which causes the gaming machine to operate uniquely. For example, the controller **34** of the gaming machine **22** may be configured to detect a wager, such as a signal from a player's depressing of the "bet one" button. Upon such an event and/or the player otherwise signaling the gaming machine to present the game, the controller may be configured to cause the at least one display **28** to display unique information, such as a unique graphical interface or unique game display, including game symbols or other game information. The controller may accept input from a player of game inputs, such as a request to spin reels or the like, via the one or more player input devices of the gaming machine **22**. As indicated above, the machine readable code may be configured in various manners, such as by having various "modules" of software which are designed to implement specific features of the game play or game presentation.

The gaming machine **22** may be configured to generate and present games in a stand-alone manner or it may be in communication with one or more external devices or systems **50** at one or more times. The gaming machine **22** might communicate with one or more of such external devices or systems **50** via one or more communication ports **52** or other interface devices. These ports or interface devices **52** may be configured to implement various communication protocols (including proprietary protocols) and communicate via wireless, wired or other communication link. For example, the gaming machine **22** may be configured as a client based device and obtain game code or game outcome information from a central game server (in which event the gaming machine controller may receive game information from the server, such as game outcome information, and use that server-generated information to present the game at the gaming machine).

For example, a gaming machine in a Class II gaming system whereby a central server sends game outcome information based on a physical or electronic pull-tab or based on a Bingo game outcome. For another example, a gaming machine in a Video Lottery Terminal system whereby a central server sends game outcome information based on an electronic lottery ticket, or based on a random number generator or based on a pseudo-random number generator. For another example, a personal video game device such as a mobile phone, tablet, laptop, desktop, PDA or any suitable personal video game device in an online or mobile client-server system whereby a central server sends game outcome information of any kind.

As indicated, the gaming machine **22** is configured to present one or more wagering games. The gaming machines **22** is preferably configured to accept some form of funding, such as funding in the form of coins, tokens, paper currency, Ticket-In-Ticket-Out (TITO) tickets, virtual currency, free play credits or other suitable funding elements, objects or devices representing value such as monetary funds. Thus, as indicated above, the gaming machine **22** preferably includes a mechanism or means for accepting monetary value. For example, the gaming machine **22** might include a media reader such as bill/ticket acceptor **48** for accepting paper monetary currency and/or an equivalence of monetary currency such as TITO tickets. Not shown are associated devices for the reading, verification and storage of the paper monetary currency and/or monetary currency equivalents, nor the communication infrastructure between the associated devices and the at least one control processor within gaming machine **22**. In another embodiment not show, the gaming machine **22** might include a coin acceptor for accepting, validating and storing coins.

The gaming machine **22** might also be configured to read FOB s, magnetic stripe cards or other media having data associated therewith and via which value or funds may be associated with the gaming machine **22**. The mechanism for accepting monetary value might also comprise hardware and/or software which allows a player to transfer (such as electronically) funds from an account, such as a casino wagering account, or a bank or other financial institution account. Such a mechanism might include a communication interface which permits the gaming machine to communicate with a mobile phone, PDA, tablet or other electronic device of the player (such as via a physical interface or wired or wireless communications, such as to enable the transfer of funds from the player to the gaming machine or system.

When the player associates funds with the gaming machine or an associated system, a credit balance is generated. The amount by which given funds are converted to credits is usually referred to the given game's "denomination". For example, inserting a $100 bill into a gaming machine with a $1 denomination results in a credit balance increase of 100 credits, whereas inserting a $100 bill into a gaming machine with a $5 denomination results in a credit balance increase of only 20 credits. Therefore, there is a direct correspondence between the number of credits wagered and the actual funds put at risk for the wager. The credit balance may comprise a plurality of monetary value credits. The player may wager some or all of the associated monetary value, such as by wagering one or more of the credits associated with the credit balance. For example, in a gaming machine with a $1 denomination, the player might provide input to a wager button or touch screen interface to wager a certain number of credits (such as "Bet 1 Credit", "Bet 5 Credits", "Bet Maximum Credits" or other options) which is essentially specifying a wager of the same number of dollars as credits. In a similar example with a gaming machine with a $0.25 denomination, each credit wagered is essentially specifying a wager of a quarter. In one embodiment, when the player's wager is received, the player's credit balance is reduced by the number of wagered credits. The player might then provide a separate input to begin the game. In other embodiment, the player might select a "play game" input, such as by pressing a "spin" button or "deal" button, which input is taken to comprise both an instruction to place a wager (such as of a pre-set or pre-selected number of credits) and to start the game. Of course, other configurations may be implemented for accepting monetary value from the player and for allowing the player to place a wager from the associated monetary value.

In one embodiment, the gaming machine **22** is configured to award winnings for one or more winning wagering game outcomes. Such winnings may be represented as credits, points or the like. In one embodiment, the player may "cash out" and thus remove previously associated funds and any awarded winnings or such may otherwise be paid to the player. These winnings may be associated with the player's credit balance, thus increasing the player's credit balance.

In one embodiment, the player may provide an input to the gaming machine **22** to indicate their desire to cash out, such as by selecting a "cash out" button or a "collect" button or a touch screen feature or providing other input. In response, a monetary value represented by the player's credit balance or the like is preferably paid, transferred or otherwise provided to the player. For example, upon an award or at cash-out, associated funds may be paid to the player by the gaming machine **22** a media such a TITO ticket from a TITO ticket dispenser **42**, wherein the TITO ticket represents the value which was paid or cashed out of the machine. In another embodiment not shown, funds may be issued by dispensing coins to a coin tray. In another embodiment not shown, funds may be issued by dispensing paper currency or other media. The aspects of gaming machine "ticketing" systems are well known. One such system is described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,048,269 to Burns, which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

In yet another embodiment, the cash-out might result in the dispensing of a card or other media which stores or represents the cashed-out funds, such as by writing funds information to a magnetic stripe of a card which is inserted into a media writer of the gaming machine or dispensed from the machine. The media writer may also update a value on other media, such as a player tracking system or loyalty program card. In other embodiments, the cash-out mechanism may result in the funds value being transferred to an external device or account, such as a player's casino account (such as associated with a casino server), a remote bank or other financial account, or an electronic device such as a player's phone, PDA or tablet.

The gaming machine **22** may also include a player loyalty program card reader **46**, and a loyalty program user interface device **44**. The interface device **44** may include a display device, and/or a player input device such as a keyboard, touch screen, or other input device. In some embodiments, the interface device **44** may include an interface to communicate with an external input device such as a player's mobile phone, PDA, or any other suitable external input device (the external device being a separate device from the gaming machine **22**). Such player loyalty program cards are well known and may permit the game operator to track play of the particular player of the gaming machine whose player loyalty program card is inserted into the gaming machine. The play tracking may be used to award the player with loyalty program points, the accumulation of which results in some benefit to the player.

As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the main game controller or processor **34** may communicate with several of the peripheral devices via one or more intermediary controllers. For example, some of the peripheral devices might comprise USB type or enabled devices which are controlled by an intermediary USB controller.

A casino may have numerous such gaming machines **22**, such as located on a casino floor or in other locations. Of course, such gaming machines **22** might be used in other environments, such as an airport, bar or tavern or other locations.

It will be appreciated that the gaming machine illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2** is only exemplary of one embodiment of a gaming machine. For example, it is possible to for the gaming machine to have various other configurations, including different shapes and styles and having different components than as just described. For example, instead of comprising a "casino"-style gaming machine, it is possible for the game of the invention to be presented on a computing device, including at a home or office computer or a player's mobile electronic device such as a PDA, phone or the like. In one embodiment, a player might log in to a casino server and the controller of the casino server may cause game information to be delivered to the player's computer via a communication link and then be displayed on a display of the player's computer. The communication link might comprise or include the Internet, a casino network such as a wired or wireless LAN, or combinations of public and/or private networks including wired and/or wireless links. In such a configuration it will be noted that the term "controller" may comprise more than one device. For example, in a server-based environment, a controller at a server may generate game information and transmit that information to a local controller at a gaming machine or a player's computer or other electronic device. The local controller at the gaming machine or the player's computer or other electronic device may then cause game information to be displayed on one or more associated displays.

The gaming machine **22** may, as noted above, be part of a system which includes other devices. For example, the gaming machine **22** may communicate with one or more casino systems, such as a player tracking server or system, an accounting system or server, a ticketing system, a bonusing system, a tournament system, other gaming machines, and external devices.

In some embodiments, a gaming system comprised of multiple devices in two or more separate locations within the same facility or different facilities are provided. Such systems may include a Video Lottery Terminal implementation or a Class II system implementation wherein game outcomes are generated in at least one central server which communicates with one or more player terminals on the casino floor via one or more wired or wireless connections.

Some embodiments are implemented via one or more gaming devices owned by the player for the wagering and winning non-monetary virtual currencies such as playing a game on a personal computer, computing tablet, smart phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or any suitable device which does not require the use of a public network and/or a private network once the game has been loaded or downloaded on the device.

Some embodiments are implemented via gaming system comprised of multiple devices owned and/or operated by separate parties in different location such as for secured client-server gaming for wagering and winning in one or more monetary currencies, or for secured client-server gaming for the wagering and winning in one or more non-monetary virtual currencies, or for non-secured client-server gaming for the wagering and winning in one or more non-monetary virtual currencies, where communication between the devices includes the use of public networks such as via the Internet and/or such as via mobile device and/or the use of private networks such via a privately owned wired networked and/or via a privately owned wireless network.

FIG. **3** shows an exemplary client-server gaming system. The client-server gaming system **300** may include at least one Central Server **310** connected to at least one Database **320** and connected to at least one Network Interface device **330**. The Central Server performs numerous functions including game content control; game outcome generation including at least one random number generator mechanism; player bankroll adjustments due to player actions such as the depositing of monetary fund, withdrawing monetary funds, earning or purchasing virtual currency, the placing of a wager, payouts based on winning game outcomes; player account support; providing transactional data to the Data-

base **320**; retrieving historic data from the Database **320**; storing and retrieving game-state data; and other functions appropriate for the management and control of a cash-based casino, and/or a virtual-currency based social game or social casino.

In some embodiments not shown, different types of Central Server functions are performed by a plurality of separate computer server hardware devices. In some embodiments not shown, a given Central Server function is performed by a plurality of separate computer server hardware devices. In some embodiments, the Database **320** and the Central Server **310** are implemented within the same computer hardware device. In some embodiments, the Database **320** is implemented via one or more computer hardware device separate from the Central Server **310**. In some embodiments, the Network Interface **330** and the Central Server **310** are implemented within the same computer hardware device. In some embodiments, the Network Interface **330** is implemented via one or more computer hardware device separate from the Central Server **310**. In some embodiments whose implementation of the Central Server **310**, and/or the Database **320**, and/or the Network Interface **330** includes a plurality of computer hardware devices, the computer hardware devices are all located in the same facility. In some embodiments whose implementation of the Central Server **310**, and/or the Database **320**, and/or the Network Interface **330** includes a plurality of computer hardware devices, at least one first computer hardware device is located in a different facility from at least one second computer hardware device.

The Network Interface **330** connects a Network **340** to which to one or more client devices **360**, **370**, **380**, **390**, **301** are also connected where the Network **340** is the Internet, or a mobile phone network, or a wireless network within a particular location or any suitable network. The example client devices include (a) a system **360** comprised of a TV or other video display **362** and an external device such as set-top box **361**, or any suitable external device, or any suitable device built-into the TV or other video display **362**; (b) a laptop **370** or other personal computing device; (c) a computing tablet **380**; (d) a mobile device **390** such as smart phone or PDA or any suitable mobile game device; (e) a desktop computer **301** which may have a display **302** and associated computer hardware **303**.

Typically, software is loaded or downloaded into a client device which controls the display of the game to the player. For secure client-server embodiments for some virtual-currency implementations and typically for all monetary-currency implementation, all game outcomes are generated on a Central Game Server **310**. For non-secure client-server embodiments for some virtual-currency implementations, the Network **340** connectivity is required for player account information and/or game state information but game outcomes are generated via client-based software.

A method of playing a game will be described in relation to FIGS. **4**A and **4**B. The sample game play summary makes reference to video poker type games. However, this reference is merely to aid explanation, and the method may be applied to any number of games. A player may place an initial wager to play a game as shown in step **402**. For example, a wager of a certain amount of credits at a gaming machine may be required to play video poker. Of course, other monetary currencies, virtual currencies, reward points, etc. may be used to place a wager and initiate play. A player may also place an extra wager in addition to the game wager in order to play the game with a "lucky spot" feature enabled.

The game is played according to the standard rules, for example the rules of video poker. When the player has activated the lucky spot feature, one or more of the card positions is randomly selected and designated as a lucky spot as shown in step **404**. In some embodiment, a plurality of card positions is designated. In some embodiments, a random number of card positions is randomly selected and visually designated. In other embodiments, the card positions form a predetermined pattern among the card positions. It noted, in some instances the number of card positions may be the same as the number of cards in a hand dealt to a player. In other instances, there may be more positions than the number of cards in a hand, such that not all positions will be covered by a card in the hand.

The lucky spot card position(s) may also be determined in a number of ways, such as being designated by the player, or being a permanent position or positions in the game. The lucky spot position(s) may represent a bonus value such as a multiplier or bonus credit/cash award. In some embodiments, if a card located on the designated card position(s) is one of the required cards to form a winning outcome, then a bonus is activated which may provide a bonus award, such as a multiplier value that is applied to the payout of the corresponding award as described in more detail below. In other embodiments, the bonus may include one or more free plays of the base game, or one or more different bonus games.

In step **406**, a game is initiated by dealing game pieces to the player. For example, in a video poker type game, a certain number of playing cards may be dealt to the player and displayed on the display of the gaming machine. In other embodiments, a certain number of dice may be rolled. In some games, the player may play multiple hands at once. In others, there may be only a single hand.

In step **408**, the player may optionally select game pieces to hold, and initiate the exchange of non-held game pieces with replacement game pieces according to rules of a base game. For example, to form a poker hand in some poker type games, the player may hold a predetermined number of cards, and the discarded cards may be replaced from cards in the deck. In some embodiments, the player may only play a single hand per play of the game. In some embodiments, the player may play more than a single hand per play of the game such as is described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,823,873 and 6,007,066. Where multiple hands are played, the held cards may be replicated across all hands as shown in step **410**, and different replacement cards may be dealt to each of the hands. Other variations are also possible based on the rules of the base game.

When the lucky spot feature is designated or active as determined in step **412**, the process proceeds to step **414**. The lucky spot feature may be activated based on any number of criteria. For example, the lucky spot may be a part of an optional or mandatory side wager. In other instances, the lucky spot feature may be activated upon a "max bet" in a base game. The lucky spot may be activated by playing a predetermined number of simultaneous hands in a game, or if the game is being played at a specific denomination. Other criteria such as a predetermined amount of points from a player tracking or loyalty program system may be used. When the lucky spot feature is determined not be active the process proceeds to step **420**.

In step **414**, a multiplier value may be assigned to the lucky spot or designated position(s). In some embodiments, the multiplier is determined randomly from a set of possible multiplier values. Other variations are also possible such as fixed multipliers that are assigned to the designated position

(s). In some instances, the multiplier may be displayed to the user as a sub-feature of the game, such as a result of a wheel spin, die throw, pick of a random card or object, a prize from a treasure chest, etc. The multiplier may also be based on other aspects of the game such as the number of active hands, the amount of a base wager or side wager, or the like. In some embodiments, the multiplier value may be visually displayed to the player prior to a game outcome. In other embodiments, the multiplier is not revealed to the player until after a game outcome.

In step **416**, it is determined whether the selected multiplier value is more than a 1× multiplier. That is, in some embodiments, a selected multiplier value may end up being a 1× multiplier value where the lucky spot randomly does not provide a bonus for that game. When the multiplier value is not more than a 1× multiplier, then the process proceeds to step **420**. When the multiplier value is greater than a 1× multiplier, the process proceeds to step **418**.

In step **418**, the selected multiplier values are assigned to the lucky spot position(s). For example, when there are multiple hands or more than one designated position in a hand, the selected multipliers are assigned to each of the designated positions among the hands. In some embodiments, the multipliers may be assigned by player input. That is, the player chooses which of the selected multipliers is placed on the available designated positions. In some instances, multiple multipliers may be placed on a single position. Where more than one multiplier is placed on a single position, the effect may be that the multipliers on that position are added together (a ×2 and a ×3 multipliers become a ×5 multiplier) or multiplied together (a ×2 and a ×3 multipliers become a ×6 multiplier). The multipliers may be combined with other bonuses associated with the game or the hand, or may be separate. In some instances, certain multipliers may be preassigned to certain positions. In other embodiments, other bonus events in place of the multipliers may be used, the awarding of a cash prize; or the awarding of a physical prize such as a commemorative coin, or a vehicle, or a voucher which can be exchange for specific items or services, or any suitable physical prize; or the triggering of a bonus game such as a free spins bonus, or a pick-based bonus game, or wheel spin bonus game, or any suitable bonus game.

In step **420**, the hands(s) are evaluated for winning outcomes. In a poker type game, the hand(s) may be compared to a predetermined set of winning hands such as a straight, a full house, etc. The winning hands may be any one of the winning hands based on payouts displayed in a pay table, or the winning hands may be hand that outranks a dealer hand or other criteria.

Once any winning hands are identified, it is determined whether a game piece that is part of the winning hand is on the lucky spot in step **422**. If so, in step **424** the multiplier value for the lucky spot is displayed (if not already displayed in steps **414**, **416**, and **418**) and the winning award payout for the winning hand is increased by the multiplier value. In some embodiments, the multiplier and the multiplier position (lucky spot) are not revealed to the player until step **424**. Finally, in step **426**, the wagers are resolved and paid out or collected based on the results of the game.

Accordingly, when the player has activated the lucky spot feature, and there is at least one winning hand at the end of play, one or more lucky spots may be randomly designated on any card position in any hand. If the card located on the designated card position is a required card to form the winning outcome, then a bonus is activated which may provide a bonus outcome such as randomly awarding a multiplier value that is applied to the payout of the corresponding award. If a given winning hand is comprised of two or more winning cards that are on designated positions, the payout for that hand may be multiplied based on the product of the corresponding multipliers

More generally stated, gameplay may proceed in the disclosed embodiments as follows: accepting a wager, randomly selecting k relocatable indicia from a set of N possible indicia, where N>k, positioning the k indicia into j possible locations (j>=k), evaluating the k indicia relative to a first paytable with payout rules based solely on the indicia values, evaluating the k indicia relative to a second paytable with payout rules based on at least the location of the indicia, and awarding any prizes earned.

A number of modifications and variations may be made to the above-described method for playing a game. For example, different ordering of display to the player such as when the multiplier value of a given designated position is indicated at a later stage of the game relative to when the given designated position is indicated, such as after final hand evaluation or such as after a final hand evaluation in which a secondary payout is earned. Another example of different ordering of display to the player is when designates spots are indicated to the player only after all game element replacement decisions have been made by the player.

In another example, when there are multiple positions designated as lucky spots, a player may win a bonus award only if all of the positions are covered by game pieces that form a part of the winning hand. In other embodiments, only a predetermined number of the multiple lucky spots must be covered. For example, an award can be given for each lucky spot that is covered by a winning game piece, for two or more lucky spot, or for any other criteria.

In other embodiments, a player may play against a dealer or a second player. Here, instead of comparing outcomes to a pay table, outcomes for each player, or the player and the dealer, are compared to determine which of the player(s) and/or dealer has a higher ranking hand. In some embodiments, a lucky spot may increase a value of the hand such that a hand that is typically a lower ranking hand may outrank a higher ranking hand based on the lucky spot(s). In other embodiments, outcomes determined by the lucky spot(s) may be a bonus outcome separate from the outcome resulting from the comparison of the hands.

In some embodiments, the number of positions available exceeds the number of gaming pieces that are dealt to the player. In this instance it is possible that a designated lucky spot may not be covered by any gaming piece that is dealt to the player. Such embodiments may be advantageous in some instances because they allow the gaming operator to greatly increase an award provided by the lucky spot(s) due to the decreased probability that a winning gaming piece is positioned on the lucky spot(s).

According to another exemplary embodiment, the methods of game play and presentation may be presented via physical gaming pieces. For example, a physical deck of playing cards or a number of physical dice may be implemented. In the disclosed embodiments, a playing surface, including a number of indicia positions may be provided. For example, a playing surface may denote one or more positions in which one of the physical game pieces used during play is to be positioned. In a further embodiment, there is a device that directs a random assortment of game pieces into the predetermined positions. For example, when the physical game pieces comprise dice, there may be device with a number of slots, pockets, or depressions that corresponds to the number of dice in which the dice may be

randomly thrown. In this manner, the dice take up one of the positions demarcated by the slots, pockets, or depressions to establish the position of the dice.

In some embodiments, a playing surface may include features such as lucky spot indicators highlighting a position, slot, or pocket to a player so the player is award of the spot or spots having multiplier values. Such lucky spot indicators may be in the form of lights adjacent to or surround the positions of the gaming pieces used during the game.

In one exemplary embodiment, a game is presented with dice having faces that correspond to a standard deck of playing cards. For example, there may be nine dice each having six faces. The faces of the dice correspond to the cards of a standard deck **52** playing cards as well as two wild cards, such as joker cards. The cards corresponding to each face of the dice may be configured to allow for each traditional winning poker hand to be achieved using the set of dice. Such a system is explained in further detail in U.S. Pat. No. 7,871,077, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference. The dice may be physical game pieces or may be electronically generated on a gaming device such as the gaming device **22** described above.

FIGS. **5**A-**4**G show a particular implementation using dice with faces corresponding a standard deck of playing cards. While this implementation is shown as displayed on a gaming device, the implementation may also be via physical dice. In FIG. **5**A, a set of dice **510** is rolled on a physical or virtual playing surface **500** to randomly select one of the indicia disposed on the faces of each die. Furthermore, the dice **510** are configured to fall into one of a number of predetermined positions **502**. In FIG. **5**B, it is shown that the dice have landed to show one face of each die **510** face-up. Further, the dice **510** are directed into a 3×3 grid **502**. While a 3×3 grid is used in this embodiment, any other desired pattern of positions may be incorporated.

The dice **510** may be randomly assigned to positions within the grid **502** on each roll, such as via results from a random number generator. In other embodiments, the dice **510** may each be assigned to a particular location within the grid **502**. As another option, the dice **510** may fall into positions on the grid **502** based on a physics engine simulating the dice **510** falling and bouncing against each other. Or in the case of actual dice **510**, the positions are determined by the dice **510** falling and bouncing into different pockets or depressions forming the grid **502** on the playing surface **500**.

In some instances, the dice **510** may be thrown or rolled simultaneously. In other instances, the dice **510** may be thrown in stages such as one at a time or at a group at a time. When the dice **510** are thrown in stages, the dice **510** in subsequent throws may affect the position and/or the value of the dice already on the playing surface **500** from a previous throw such as when the newly introduced dice **510** hit dice **510** already on the playing surface.

In this embodiment, designated positions on the grid **502** correspond to a secondary bonus award, multiplier, or the like as described above. The bonus award is achieved when winning dice are disposed in the predetermined bonus positions. Here, as shown in FIGS. **5**A-**5**D, three bonus patterns **520** have been identified. A first bonus pattern **522** includes corner positions and a center position of the 3×3 grid **502**. A second **524** and a third bonus pattern **526** include a center and a right vertical column of the 3×3 grid **502**. Of course, other patterns and positions may be identified as bonus positions including a single position to any five positions of the 3×3 grid **502**.

As shown in FIG. **5**B, the indicial showing face-up on the dice **510** are compared to traditional poker hand rankings to determine whether a player wins the dice poker type game. In FIG. **5**B, a 3-of-a-kind hand has been created with the J ♣, J♥, and the J♦ all landing face up on the dice. However, bonus award is not awarded because the winning indicia do not correspond with one of the predetermined winning patterns **520**. Similarly, in FIG. **5**C, a straight is achieved by a player without triggering a bonus award.

In FIG. **5**D, however, a bonus award is triggered. Here, as a result of rolling and positioning the dice **510**, a full house is achieved on the dice **510** with a 4♣, 4♠, 4♥, 7♠, and 7♦. Further, three of the winning dice correspond with the predetermined bonus position **524** of the center column of the 3×3 grid. Thus, not only is the player awarded for achieving the winning hand, but a bonus award is also triggered. The bonus award may be any number of awards as described above. Here, the bonus award allows the player to participate in a bonus game.

In FIG. **5**E, a bonus game is initiated by rolling the dice in a plurality of draw rounds to determine whether the player can achieve up to 10 winning hands. For example, as shown in FIG. **5**F, a player may win a full house during the bonus game, and the winnings are awarded to the player. In this example, the winning dice may be removed, and then the dice are rolled again to replace the winning dice to determine if another winning hand may be formed. When 10 winning hands are achieved, or when no more winning hands may be won, the bonus game ends.

While various embodiments of the invention have been described, it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that many more embodiments and implementations are possible that are within the scope of this invention. In addition, the various features, elements, and embodiments described herein may be claimed or combined in any combination or arrangement.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method of conducting a game on a computing device having at least one display device, at least one player input device, at least one memory device, and at least one controller associated therewith, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an amount of credit to increase a credit balance stored in the at least one memory device;

receiving from the player input device an indication of an amount from the credit balance to be used in the actuation of an instance of the game;

randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface;

identifying one or more predefined winning outcomes, wherein the one or more predefined winning outcomes are identified based on the randomly selected plurality of relocatable playing pieces independently of the position of each relocatable playing piece of the plurality of the relocatable playing pieces in the plurality of the gaming positions;

randomly designating at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game; and

distributing an award, the award being determined based on (i) the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions comprising the one or more predefined winning outcomes, and (ii) the subset of the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions com-

prising the one or more predefined winning outcomes and the plurality of gaming positions comprising a lucky spot position.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of relocatable gaming pieces are dice.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the plurality of relocatable gaming pieces are playing cards.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more predefined winning outcomes comprises a poker hands.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the award is one or more of a free game, a bonus event or an amount of credit.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the award is a first value if based on (i) and a second value if based on (ii), wherein the second value is greater than the first value.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the second value is multiple of the first value.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of randomly designating at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game is actuated prior to the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of displaying an indication of the randomly designated lucky spot position on the playing surface prior to the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of randomly designating at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game is actuated during the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of displaying an indication of the randomly designated lucky spot position on the playing surface during the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of randomly designating at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game is actuated subsequent to the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of displaying an indication of the randomly designated lucky spot position on the playing surface subsequent to the step of randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the playing surface comprises a group of two or more cells defined by at least one row and at least one column.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the plurality of gaming positions comprises a subset of the group.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the group of two or more cells comprises a grid defined by two or more rows and columns.

17. A method of conducting a game on a computing device having at least one display device, at least one player input device, at least one memory device, and at least one controller associated therewith, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an amount of credit to increase a credit balance stored in the at least one memory device;

receiving from the player input device an indication of an amount from the credit balance to be used in the actuation of an instance of the game;

randomly selecting a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface;

identifying one or more predefined winning outcomes, wherein the one or more predefined winning outcomes are identified based on the randomly selected plurality of relocatable playing pieces independently of the position of each relocatable playing piece of the plurality of the relocatable playing pieces in the plurality of the gaming positions;

randomly designating at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game, wherein the lucky spot position for the instance of the game is randomly designated at a first point in time during the instance of the game either prior to, during, or subsequent to, the random selection of the plurality of relocatable playing pieces for display in the plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface;

displaying an indication of the randomly designated lucky spot position on the playing surface at a second point in time during the instance of the game; and

distributing an award, the award being determined based on (i) the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions comprising the one or more predefined winning outcomes, and (ii) the subset of the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions comprising the one or more predefined winning outcomes and the plurality of gaming positions comprising a lucky spot position.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the second point in time is one of either the same or subsequent to the first point in time.

19. A system for conducting a game having at least one display device, comprising at least one player input device, at least one memory device, and at least one controller associated therewith, the memory device including executable code and the at least one controller executing the executable code whereby the system:

receives an amount of credit to increase a credit balance stored in the at least one memory device;

receives from the player input device an indication of an amount from the credit balance to be used in the actuation of an instance of the game;

randomly selects a plurality of relocatable playing pieces from the relocatable playing pieces stored in the at least one memory device for display in a plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface;

identifies one or more predefined winning outcomes, wherein the one or more predefined winning outcomes are identified based on the randomly selected plurality of relocatable playing pieces independently of the

position of each relocatable playing piece of the plurality of the relocatable playing pieces in the plurality of the gaming positions;

randomly designates at least one and less than all of the plurality of gaming positions as a lucky spot position for the instance of the game, wherein the lucky spot position for the instance of the game is randomly designated at a first point in time during the instance of the game either prior to, during, or subsequent to, the random selection of the plurality of relocatable playing pieces for display in the plurality of gaming positions on the playing surface;

displays an indication of the randomly designated lucky spot position on the playing surface at a second point in time during the instance of the game; and

distributes an award, the award being determined based on (i) the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions comprising the one or more predefined winning outcomes, and (ii) the subset of the plurality of relocatable playing pieces positioned in the plurality of gaming positions comprising the one or more predefined winning outcomes and the plurality of gaming positions comprising a lucky spot position.

20. The system of claim **19**, wherein the second point in time is a time that is either the same or subsequent to the first point in time.

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